2: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1954
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The burial is marked by extraordinary haste, the *goro* being sent for immediately. If possible, the dead are buried within three or four hours, at all times of the day, even at dawn or dusk, if only there is sufficient light to see by. There is no articulate fear or concern behind this haste, say, fear of the ghost of the dead or concern with the fate of the soul; rather is it the presence of the corpse as such which the Nupe find disturbing. The people in the house especially, who must stay with the body until the grave-diggers take over, are anxious to see it go; for 'the person who sees a dead body, his heart sinks'. For the same reason children are at once sent out of the house and not allowed to return until after the burial. When the *goro* arrive (usually three or four men) they wash the body with soap and water, rub it with aromatic camwood, wrap it into a new indigo-dyed cloth, and pull a cap (in the case of a man) or a kerchief (in the case of a woman) over the face of the deceased. Men of rank are today buried, in Moslem fashion, in a white gown, with a turban on the head. The grave is dug, the body placed in it, and the grave covered with loose earth, without ceremony. If the deceased was an old man or woman, the *goro* perform a libation of beer over the closed grave and speak a brief prayer, thus:

'Grandfather of the *kuci* (i.e. the deceased) who is returning to the earth, (thy) grandchild is now coming. (When) he arrives, spread (thy) two hands, receive him to your heart.'

All this is done in secrecy, no one watching; the mourners stay away, and when the *goro* leave the grave they will shut the door of the hut with a curtain or bar the access to the burial place with branches placed across the path. On the next day the ban will be lifted, the earth over the grave will be beaten down and levelled by the young women of the house, and if the grave had been dug in a sleeping hut (that is, for an old man), his heir will at once move in. When the grave-diggers have completed their task they join the mourners, being offered refreshment and a small fee, and leave shortly afterwards.

The news of the death travels fast, and an hour or two later the house will begin to fill with guests. Men and women stay apart, the former in the entrance hut of the house, the latter in the women's huts. All are dressed in old clothes, simply and without ostentation, and sit about stiffly, with expressionless faces. Only the chief mourners among the women—the mother, sisters, and the widows of the deceased—are expected to express their grief more violently, by loud sobbing and an occasional high-pitched wail (called *tigi*) which is the conventional expression of deep sorrow. The nature of the gathering will vary with the status of the departed; if he is a titled elder, all the other village elders will

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765 come to mourn him; if he is a young man, all his age mates will be present. Messengers have also been sent to nearby hamlets, and if visitors live too far to arrive on the day of the burial, they will come later and stay for the first eight days. The family head (or his heir if it is the former who died) will receive the guests and offer them food and drink. Every new visitor, before joining the mourners, kneels down before the family head and speaks the conventional formula of condolence, *okú be hákuri*—'Hail with Compassion'.

The mood of the mourners, which must be kept up for eight days, is rigidly conventionalized, though the convention is maintained with varying success. Also, it differs for the sexes. The men keep a severe, dignified and calm countenance; there must be no irrelevant chatting, only subdued talk, one topic alone being allowed, the dead person, his achievements and qualities. But the rule is often broken; on one such occasion I heard the mourners discuss farming prospects and taxes (if in whispers), and one man, whom I had some time previously presented with a watch, thought nothing of asking my wife, in the middle of the mourning, to wind up his watch for him. However, as soon as a new visitor enters, everyone at once puts on the rigid look that passes for a show of grief. Nor is the violent mourning of the women uninterrupted; now and again they may cease their sobbing and wailing and rest for a while. Female relatives who come from distant places will join in the wailing for one day and afterwards stay as ordinary guests. They, too, sit together and talk in whispers, but do not omit their more prosaic duties; for young mothers come with their babies, who must be fed and looked after, and others will help with the work in the house.

For eight days the relatives of the deceased may not wash, dress their hair or change their clothes. None of the older people may leave the house, and the women not even their huts (save for calls of nature). The men observe this rule for four days only, so that afterwards they may help with the preparations for the Eight Days' feast. But even before that household work has been going on all the time, being shouldered mainly by the younger folk. The young men will continue to go to the farms or to the market, joining the mourners in the evening, while girls and young women look after the house. These are least affected by the duties of mourning; when, the day after the burial, they level the floor over the grave, they exhibit no signs of grief, but laugh and joke freely. This, the Nupe will tell you, is quite in order: for the workers are always in-laws and 'joking relations' of the deceased (daughters-in-law or the wives of younger brothers), and are hence exempt from mourning.

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On the eighth day or some time during the first week each guest makes a small gift of food to the family head, which is meant to be used in the funeral meal and represents the guests' 'greeting' or 'salute'. That day starts with a beer sacrifice, performed by the family head outside the sleeping hut of the deceased. The congregation consists of his (or her) male relations, the old men forming the usual inner ring while the youths, including the sons of the deceased, sit on the outside, looking forlorn and dejected, and being generally ignored. The family head addresses God (or sometimes the *kuci*), saying:

'We make mourning for so-and-so, who died. God, cause all people to have health. We offer you water (i.e. beer) because of the death. God, grant health to everyone; may no one die from now on.'

The beer is then drunk by the old men, which act concludes the ceremonial. Let me add that during this brief sacrifice, though it conforms so closely to the general formula of rituals, the men wear their ordinary clothes, only the bared head indicating the sacred occasion.

Soon afterwards the general meal begins. And now the house loses all appearance of mourning. It is crowded with visitors, there is constant coming and going, children get in one's way at every step, and everyone is busy preparing food, handing it round, or consuming it. The women laugh and joke while they work, the men no longer endeavour to behave severely, and even the chief mourners have turned into ordinary hosts or guests. If it is the funeral of an old man or woman, drummers and musicians will have been engaged, and soon the younger folk will sing and dance, men and girls apart, each group keeping to its own songs and dances. These are in no way peculiar to the occasion, but correspond in style and expression to any ordinary form of 'merry-making'. Ample supplies of beer keep up the spirits of the gathering until nightfall, when the feast comes to an end, the visitors departing and the hosts retiring to their huts.

The period following the Eight Days' ceremony involves few prohibitions. Widows must continue to wear the simple dress of mourning and must not wash or do their hair; nor must they leave the compound, though they are now free to pursue their daily tasks. As regards the men, the brothers (or the husband) of the deceased should refrain from shaving until the Forty Days' ceremony, though this custom has now fallen into disuse. The men go about freely but will try to be at home at night. Guests will still occasionally visit the house, but now these visits are free from the restraint and show of grief that marked the earlier occasion. Forty days after the death and burial, the family head repeats the beer

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765 sacrifice, and another big feast takes place, which lasts two days but otherwise duplicates the celebration of the Eight Days.

The widows may now leave the compound and go into the town, though they may do so only at dark, when they cannot be recognized. The prohibition to wash or to change their clothes remains in force for another four months, and not until then may the widows begin to think about re-marriage. The final funerary rite is once more a copy of the previous feasts, save that all present will now [302] wear their best and most festive clothes. The widows especially, if they are still young, will stain their hands and feet with henna and their eyes with antimony, prospective brides even in appearance. For if the question of re-marriage arises, the feast of the Hundred-Twenty Days also serves as an occasion for the family council at which this prospect is discussed and decided. Four months after a man's death, the Nupe argue, a pregnancy for which he was responsible must be noticeable. If so, the widow may not re-marry until the child is born and old enough to be left; the child, called *dzangi*, 'parting-gift child', would then belong to the father's family and stay with it. If the widow is not pregnant at the time (noticeably so, that is), she is free to re-marry, and even if she does not, any child she may subsequently give birth to will be disclaimed by the late husband's family.

764 184 It now remains to compare the traditional ceremonial with the modern Mohammedan version. The *goro* grave-diggers, as we know, are replaced by mallams, whose work and religious ministrations are surrounded by no secrecy. Nor are these restricted to the death of old people. They now consist in brief prayers, spoken or read in the presence of all the men of the house (women being excluded), both before the body is interred and again before the grave is closed. When the mallams later join the mourners they will continue to murmur prayers, rosary in hand. At the death of an important man, when the grave hut cannot hold all the mourners, the main prayers are said in the roomy entrance hut, and the body will be brought there for the service before being interred. On such occasions mallams of highest standing will officiate, the *Alkali* or *Liman* leading the prayers, and these are interspersed with passages of impromptu praise and eulogy. On such occasions, too, the men among the guests will wear, not the simple dress of mourning, but rich gowns meant to display their rank and position. The mallams are offered food and given a sum of money, only part of which is a payment for their services; the rest is intended as a pious offering, for distribution among all the mallams of the town. It is extremely shameful to give too little, and families will borrow money or pawn their belongings rather than risk dismissing the mallams with a gift that might be considered shabby; so that the

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585 and after this festivities begin, ending on the ninth day with the segregation of the bride. The last ceremony, on the 12th day, consists of a ritual meal of a cock and hen by the bride and bridegroom and their close relatives, after which the marriage may be consummated.[12]

Divorce

586 According to Temple[13] a woman may divorce her husband if he has been convicted of crime, if he fails to maintain her, or deserts her for three years. A man may divorce his wife for adultery but seldom does so, since, as Nadel points out, the economic dependence of many husbands on their wives discourages them from [558 837] seeking a divorce on these grounds. They also feel that it involves a loss of prestige to appear in the rôle of a wronged husband. Adultery is, indeed, widespread among women of every status, particularly in Bida.[14]

Burial

764 According to the traditional ceremonial, burial (*mba*) takes place as soon as possible after death and at any time of day when there is enough light to see by. The grave-diggers (*goro*), who also prepare the body for burial, are sent for immediately death has taken place. The age and kinship position of the deceased determines the place of burial, old men and women, and family heads, being buried under the floor of their sleeping-huts, with a sacrifice performed (by the *goro*) over the grave. Others are buried without ceremony in the space between the huts, by the compound wall, or in a disused, roofless hut. People dying of smallpox are buried in the normal way, except that the body is wrapped in old rags instead of a new [766] cloth. Lepers are buried in the bush. The grave is oblong and shallow, only about 2 ft. below the ground, with a roof of wooden beams covered by a white grass mat, to keep the earth off the corpse. The body is placed on a similar mat, lying on its side, Moslems facing east. A grave is not marked in any way, the earth being carefully levelled, indeed, if burial has been in a sleeping-hut, the hut continues to be used.

● 765 At the death of chiefs or priests any particular ritual " owned " by them is performed. The full funeral ceremonies consist of three rituals, carried out after 8, 40, and 120 days, bearing the names of these time intervals. The full series is performed only for married men; old men, without surviving widows, do not have the last ritual. In general, children, unmarried young men, and women have only the " eight days."

Mourning must be kept up for eight days, during which relatives of the deceased must not wash, dress their hair, or change their clothes, but men observe this rule for only four days so that they may make preparations for the " eight days " feast. Widows observe mourning until four months after the " eight days " and may not think of re-marriage until then.

764 184 In Moslem funerals, the *goro* grave-diggers are replaced by mallams, who speak or read prayers in the presence of the men of the house, both before the body is buried and again before the grave is finally closed. The mallams are offered food and money, in payment for their services and as a " pious offering " to be distributed among the other mallams of the town. The subsequent ceremonials have also been made occasions for alms-giving.[15]

[12] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 19–21.
[13] Temple, 1919, pp. 321–2.
[14] Nadel, 1942, pp. 152–3.
[15] Nadel, 1954a, pp. 121–30.

875 sometimes consult a book before speaking; if it concerns anyone
787 who is absent and unknown to the Mallam, the questioner lays his hand on the ground, at which the Mallam gazes.

In the case of illness the Is-sabi is consulted, as if death is certain it would be mere waste to spend money on doctors and on medicine, as is otherwise done.

759 Some doctors have acquired great reputations, and people travel long distances to consult them. As they are not paid unless they effect a cure, they will not undertake hopeless cases.

764 When a man dies he is buried in the compound in a rectangular-
766 shaped grave, which has three depths, one within the other. The body, which is wrapped in a large new cloth, is laid on a mat on one side in the deepest part, the centre, facing eastwards; wood is placed over it to prevent the earth touching the corpse.
[554] Some of the more important men have a special burial-room in their compound, but with this exception it is the same for men, women, and children. Those who die of small-pox or who commit suicide are, however, taken out and thrown into the bush by dogarai, for no one else will touch them. If a body is being carried home it may never be laid down, so a large number
[184] of bearers are provided to relieve one another. The pagan Nupe pour beer upon the grave, and offer prayers to the spirits.*

765 For seven days after a death the brothers, sons, daughters, and other near relations and friends, come and sit with the bereaved principal from six in the morning till six in the evening. Dirty white clothes constitute mourning apparel, and this is worn for children, parents and spouse.

765 A widower may go out after seven days and work a little,
768 but not much till forty days have elapsed, when he may resume his ordinary habits, though he continues to wear white for five months. Widows, however, remain shut up in the compound for five months, during which time they may not dress their hair, or remove their sandals, or see any man. This over they remarry, and can exercise their own choice as to a groom, being allowed forty days within [illegible] to make their arrangements. By the end of this time the law of the country insists on marriage, an old woman getting an old husband, for no one will bury an unmarried woman and, of course, she has no home where she has a right to lie. It is a terror to the widows during their enforced five months of singleness lest they may fall ill or die, for even sickness, following so hard on the tragedy of death, would be considered a sign of evil, and possibly witch-dom, so the woman would find difficulty in securing another husband.

768 The heirs are responsible for all debts incurred by the deceased, whose property is divided between his eldest son, his other

* Sapke and Mokwa.